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FM AMCONSUL SAO PAULO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6100  
INFO RHEHNSC/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 7183  
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RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC 2634

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TAGS: [KMDR](#) [OPRC](#) [OIIP](#) [ETRD](#) [BR](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: WESTERN HEMISPHERE: ECUADOR, U.S. BASE IN  
MANTA; SAO PAULO

#### 11. "In Chavez's Club"

Liberal, largest national circulation daily Folha de S. Paulo (11/29) editorialized: "Leftist Rafael Correa was elected Sunday the eighth Ecuadorian president in the past ten years, and this shows the level of political instability in that Andean nation.... Correa's party did not elect any congressmen.... It is almost certain, therefore, that Correa, as happened with Hugo Chavez, of whom he is an admirer and friend, will call a Constituent Assembly, which may try to dissolve the Parliament.... Correa showed two faces during the campaign. In the first round, he adopted a radical discourse.... In the second, he moderated his tone. He repelled the idea of changing the currency and made comments aimed at pleasing investors. It is too soon to say which Correa will prevail. It is most likely that, as Evo Morales did in Bolivia, Correa will act as a populist nationalist domestically, and show himself more flexible and conciliatory in foreign policy. Anyway, Brazilian diplomats should be prepared to face difficulties resulting from a regional reemergence of anti-imperialist caudillo-type politicians also in Ecuador."

#### 12. "A Moderate In Ecuador?"

An editorial in center-right O Estado de S. Paulo (11/29) remarked: "Ecuadorian President elect Rafael Correa will face major difficulties to have his most ambitious project approved: the call of a Constituent Assembly to 're-found' Ecuador.... Correa has no congressional bloc to support him.... Prudently, he established priorities that have general support. He will not touch the nation's [dollar] currency adopted in 2000.... He will accept productive foreign capital.... He will try to join OPEC again and will look for technical cooperation in Venezuela. But he will not adopt radical measures against foreign companies, as Evo Morales did. Correa also made clear that Ecuador will not ratify the free trade agreement signed with the U.S., whose Congress has not yet ratified it either.... And he will not renew with the U.S. the concession of the Manta air base. The Rafael Correa who was elected does not have the radical profile of the first round candidate. Let us hope that the difficulties he will have to face do not throw him in the Havana-Caracas-La Paz axis."

#### 3. "The U.S. Wanted To Enlarge The Base"

Political commentator Newton Carlos opined in liberal, largest national circulation daily Folha de S. Paulo (11/29): "Ecuadorian President elect Rafael Correa said he will not renew the concession of the Mantra military base that the U.S. Southern Command is

currently operating in Ecuador. The concession was made in 1999 without the necessary Congressional hearing, and the original project has been expanded with enlargement of runways to permit the landing of airborne troops. The official idea is to provide support to Plan Colombia, fighting drug trafficking, which means unavoidable involvement in counter-insurgency operations or of intervention in the Colombian civil war.... Those who see Manta as a possible new Guantanamo argue that the concession has in practice transformed the base into a military enclave. U.S. military in Manta enjoy diplomatic immunity, do not pay taxes and bear 'license to kill,' according to his most radical opponents. The new Ecuadorian president has promised to end all that."

McMullen